

151  
E2



Class LC 151

Book .E 2





8. 531  
D

# ILLITERACY

AND ITS

## SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND INDUSTRIAL EFFECTS.

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BY INVITATION BEFORE

*The Union League Club of New York City.*

BY

HON. JOHN EATON, LL. D.,

United States Commissioner of Education.

DECEMBER 21, 1882.

PUBLISHED BY THE CLUB





# ILLITERACY

AND ITS

## SOCIAL, POLITICAL

AND

## INDUSTRIAL EFFECTS.

---

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED BY INVITATION  
BEFORE

The Union League Club of New York City,

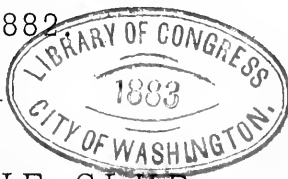
BY

HON. JOHN EATON, LL. D.,

United States Commissioner of Education.

---

DECEMBER 21, 1882



---

PUBLISHED BY THE CLUB.

110151  
EN

22



## ILLITERACY.

Gentlemen :

When you honored me with an invitation to address you, the following topic was suggested :—

“ Illiteracy as shown by the Census of 1880 : its effects, Industrial, Social, and Political, upon the Country ; the Nation the only patron of education equal to the present emergency.”

Since the days of struggle over the formation of the Constitution, when George Mason, the largest slaveholder in Virginia, neighbor and worthy compatriot of George Washington, so strongly urged emancipation, there have never failed to be those who believed that African slavery was a peril to our institutions. They sought for peaceful remedies, and when the great and terrible war burst upon the land their consciences did not forsake them ; they stood by the country and saved the Union.

This organization, by whose kind invitation I am here to speak this evening, had its origin in the support of that cause, and fitly cherishes its endeavors in that behalf as among its most imperishable honors. It is not inappropriate as representatives of the great and far-seeing property interests of this metropolis that you, in the spirit of George Mason, should weigh the evils threatened by illiteracy and seek for their removal. I remember well how those of us lately in the field watched the effect of the action of this and similar bodies upon the support of the Government in the late struggle ; and I can readily apprehend how many now most exposed to

the perils of illiteracy watch anxiously for some action on your part in favor of their relief, which in the end can only result in your advantage as did the saving of the Union. You are accustomed in dealing with your great and manifold business interests to the most exact use of figures, and I shall trust myself all the more confidently therefore to your indulgence if, on different points, I adopt the same method and use figures somewhat freely.

Nearly twenty years have passed since the declarations of universal freedom; yet the slavery of ignorance remains with all its perils. Joy is increasing in all the land that man no longer has property in his fellow-man; yet we must confess that the evils threatened by African slavery are only partly averted. The millions in ignorance are not free as American liberty must make free; their ignorance invites vice, crime and petty demagogism to become their masters, and by ruling them to assail the foundations upon which rest the very citadel of our liberties.

The colored persons, ten years of age and upward, unable to write, as returned by the late census, number 3,220,878, or a number equal to the entire population when the original thirteen States were first united under one form of government. The foreign white population, of ten years of age and upward, unable to write, number 763,620; and the number of native white persons of the same age unable to write is 2,255,460. The total number, ten years old and upward, unable to write in all the States and Territories and the District of Columbia, is 6,239,958, showing, as compared with similar figures from the census of 1870, relatively an advance of three per cent. in intelligence, but an actual gain in the number of illiterates of 581,814, in spite of all the educational activities of the intermediate ten years.

Notwithstanding this mass of darkness we are among those who believe in all the possibilities of our destiny for good for our posterity and for the other nations of the earth; but we know that a house divided against itself

cannot stand. Intelligence and virtue, trained in the love of freedom, are always ready for its defence against all the hosts of ignorance and evil. But here the irrepressible conflict remains, and it is the part of wisdom to consider how it may be terminated by measures of peace and moderation and not involve future generations in a catastrophe more bloody and calamitous than our own civil war.

We offer no Utopian schemes. We do not come as destructives purposing to tear down everything; we do not propose to arrest the growth of our institutions. On the contrary, we invoke greater activity on the part of all the agencies that enlighten or mould or preserve society for good.

Among the foremost of these to which we turn with assured expectation is the family; and where outside of the borders of America is there a larger proportion of families to the whole population? Where have its better aspirations equal opportunity? All the possibilities of American citizenship are before its every child. How many hallowed home influences guard the life of infancy, train its earlier activities, mould its power to high purposes and noble action! But, alas! how many homes are broken up by the death of father or mother, or by the weakness or criminality of the parent, and childhood's tender years exposed to the perils of orphanage or thrown into the midst of vice and crime. Society in its benevolent action already counts these children in localities by tens of thousands. That noble effort of Brace and his coadjutors, in your city alone, has taken over sixty thousand from the perils of city streets to the safeguards of country homes. Our reform schools and orphan asylums give most appalling testimony to the aid our home life requires and show the disproportionate increase of neglected children. All the efforts of organized and enlightened charity are not equal to the demand. Amid vital statistics Rachel everywhere mourns her infant children. Nearly half the children die in infancy and come not to the chances of future good or evil among men.

Near the family is the church, that other divine institution, established for man's enlightenment in his duties to God and his fellow-man and for the conservation of the best interests of society. For this great institution, too, we invoke greater activity, and we believe that the American church is not hindered but quickened to greater power by its separation from the state. We believe thereby it occupies an ideal position towards which its wisest adherents the world over would have it move as the sphere in which it may most serve man and honor God.

Where else has the church greater respect or more power over the consciences and lives of the people? Where else has its press or pulpit greater influence? Where besides in the same length of time has it garnered a richer literature? Where are its schools on the Sabbath more effective? And yet, according to the last well authenticated figures, their membership numbered only about seven millions and a quarter; and yet if none but youth attended these schools, there should be in them from fifteen millions to twenty millions. Yet in what nation under the heavens have the schools of the church of all grades more freedom, and gained such endowments or given promise for greater future triumphs?

Some claim for the church such exclusive control over education, that we must look more carefully into the possibilities of provision for this great emergency by denominational agencies.

The separate schools of theology, including Catholic and Protestant, number 142, have 633 learned professors, 5,242 students, and have invested in buildings and grounds, \$6,221,607. The productive funds of the Protestant schools amount to \$8,537,683, and yield an income of \$576,897. All the investments in all forms for instruction in the professions of law and medicine bear no comparison to these figures.

But the churches have achieved far greater results in the provisions of college instruction for men and women. Of these institutions announced as belonging

to one or the other of the denominations of Christians, Protestant or Catholic, there are 438, with 4,543 professors and 60,947 students. The value of their buildings, grounds, and apparatus is \$31,898,510 ; the amount of their productive funds, \$23,403,945, yields a reported income, with tuition fees, of \$3,068,554. In this connection it is interesting, however unsatisfactory, to remark that the productive funds invested for the education of women is not one-fiftieth of the amount similarly invested for the college education of men.

Of that other grade of institutions established for secondary instruction, such as high schools, academies, and preparatory schools, there are reported under denominational control 837, with 4,205 teachers and 73,770 students, owning in buildings, grounds, and apparatus \$10,779,334, and having in productive funds \$1,684,359.

In these three classes of schools, those of theology, and those for secondary and superior instruction under denominational control, we have the grand total of 139,826 students and an investment in property and productive funds amounting to \$82,195,728.

But we must pass to another great and special work of the churches. Rejoicing in the American Sabbath for man's rest and freedom to worship, the several religious denominations acknowledge it to be their special responsibility on that day to preach the gospel of man's redemption. Learning and eloquence may well rejoice in the power of their pulpits. The multitudes whose attention they command in places of worship no cursory glance can number; but our purpose requires a nearer view.

We have not the data expected from the great census of 1880, but on the supposition that the ratios for that decade may be substantially the same as for the previous one (1860-1870), the following statistics will be sufficiently accurate for our argument.

Great as is the Sabbath worship on the first impression, allowing that there are now 28,170,000 sittings in the religious edifices of all the various denominations,

there would be required 21,830,000 additional sittings to accomodate the total population of 50,000,000, which at an average expense of \$12 per sitting, would cost \$261,960,000. To supply the preachers required, at the usual average of 1 to 375 persons, there would need be an addition of 58,213 clergymen. Now, should the churches undertake to give these men a preparation of only three years at the present rates of aid and with present facilities, it would cost, over and above all that the young men could do for themselves, at the rate of \$100 a year, \$17,463,900 ; and their first year's salary as preachers, should they be able to live on an average of \$500, would demand for its payment \$29,106,500. The total of these three items for the supply of the preached gospel to all of our fifty million people would cost \$308,530,400.

Another special means of promoting religious progress is the circulation of religious books, newspapers, and especially the Holy Bible. Great and excellent as is this service as now rendered, how many hundreds of thousands of souls are unreached by either agency ! It would require a circulation of 10,000,000 religious papers to furnish one to each family.

When the spirit of American civilization invites religious organizations to a work so vast, so far beyond their present means and efforts, so out of proportion to all that they are undertaking, would it not border on cruelty or absurdity to demand of our churches, as some would do, that they should assume entire control of the education of the people in all its forms, under all conditions ? But would the idea of those who advocate exclusive church direction of education limit that great work to a few, or to the ruling classes, or to those who could pay ? Could the friends of the church consent to an idea so consistent with the illiteracy and degradation of the masses ?

We believe the New England fathers wisely sought a better way. Studying profoundly in the light of the divine word all the data in human experience that they could command, after prolonged struggles they reached

their well known principles of liberty and right of conscience, person and property. They also became profoundly convinced that the preservation of these principles which they so dearly cherished could be assured for the future only by the training of the young to whom they were to be committed, and that this education could only be made universal and sufficient for a free people by that other institution, the state, which they cherished as divine, while announcing its total separation from the authority of the church. They welcomed all voluntary action by the family and by the church, and we have seen how conspicuous were the results attained ; but they wisely committed to the state, in which only resided the power that could touch all the people and tax all the property within its borders, the guarantee of the education of all the children. So they expected the family to teach justice, so they expected the church by all its moral power to enforce justice between man and man ; but they reserved the guarantees of this justice to the civil organization. Thus they expected the family and the church to do their utmost for the education of society ; but the final assurance, the absolute guarantee of this education, supremely necessary to the continuance of free institutions, they laid in the very foundations of the civil government. Their conceptions and practices have so commended themselves to American lovers of liberty that in every State and in every Territory that has any organization in law there are legal provisions for the public education of the children. The schools of the people, the common schools, are justly and widely regarded with the profoundest interest. Statesmen and publicists the world over have not looked in them in vain for the sources of many of the excellences of American life. May it be always and everywhere true of them, as the great Webster was able to testify to an English inquirer. After remarking that he had been familiar with the New England system of free schools for more than fifty years and avowing his hearty approval of it, he continues:

“I owe to it my own early training. In my own recollection of these schools there exists, to this moment, a fresh feeling of the sobriety of the teachers, the good order of the school, the reverence with which the Scriptures were read, and the strictness with which all moral duties were enjoined and enforced. In these schools, or it may be partly by my mother’s care, I was taught the elements of letters so early that I never have been able to remember a time when I could not read the New Testament and did not read it. Many moral tales and instructive and well-contrived fables, always so alluring to childhood, learned by heart in these schools, are still perfectly preserved in my memory. And, in my own case, I can say that, without these early means of instruction ordained by law and brought home to the small villages and hamlets for the use of all their children equally, I do not see how I should have been able to become so far instructed in the elements of knowledge as to be fit for higher schools.

“In my opinion, the instruction communicated in the free schools of New England has a direct effect for good on the morals of youth. It represses vicious inclinations, it inspires love of character and it awakens honorable aspirations. In short, I have no conception of any manner in which the popular republican institutions under which we live could possibly be preserved, if early education were not freely furnished to all, by public law, in such forms that all shall gladly avail themselves of it.”

He proceeds, in language almost prophetic :

“I may be permitted to add, that in my judgment, as the present tendency of things almost everywhere is to extend popular power, the peace and well-being of society require, at the same time, a corresponding extension of popular knowledge.”

The favorable side of this public school system cannot be contemplated without gratification. In every State, by the provision of the State university or agricul-



tural college, the ladder of learning, with one foot standing in the gutter, invites every child, step by step, by a free course to the highest instruction. The conception of the theory is an honor to the human mind. None are excluded; every one is invited to some measure of instruction, be he sound in health or be he feeble minded, or deaf, or dumb, or blind.

What blessings are offered to the poor! Here is a family struggling for subsistence and has no money to pay a penny for the instruction of its children, that perhaps number four; one, of a sound mind, goes to the public school, and if he has the capacity, through the collegiate course, and is then capable of high trusts and responsibilities; the second, an idiot, is taken to the school for the feeble minded and becomes self-supporting; the third is blind, and the State offers the school for the blind; the fourth is deaf and dumb, and the State offers the school, and the Nation, the college at Washington. It is a glory of American law that what is left for these unfortunates elsewhere to charity, here has the certainty of public administration.

Why should we not, glancing over the annual column of educational work, congratulate ourselves that there are 48 schools of law with 3,134 students, 120 schools of medicine with 14,006 students, 364 universities and colleges with 59,594 students; that there have been given for education in the last ten years over \$61,000,000 by private individuals of wealth; and that annually there are nine millions in attendance upon the public schools, and an annual expenditure for these schools of eighty million dollars from the public treasury?

But we must not pause here; we must look at the reverse side. New England, to-day, has but one college student, male and female, to every 167 families; whereas at the end of the first 23 years of New England history, or when there were 20,000 souls in the settlements, there was one university graduate to every 40 families. May we not say that hence came such wisdom in laying the foundations of those States? When will the educated

classes anywhere attain the same relation to the whole body of the people?

But against this attendance upon the public schools there is the non-attendance of 5,754,759. Allowing that these odd hundred thousands are in private schools that are not reported, there remain 5,000,000 of children of school age untaught. To furnish these sittings in buildings at the usual average of \$20 per sitting, would cost a hundred millions in money; to furnish them teachers would require an increase of 30,000 to the teaching corps, and a single year's preparation of these teachers at the average rate in New York would cost ten millions of dollars.

The pay of these 30,000 additional teachers for one year of ten months at the rate of thirty-two dollars a month, which is about the average throughout the country, would amount to \$9,600,000. Add to this the items for preparation and school-house sittings necessary for these non-attending school children, and you have the grand total required for the first year of \$120,000,000.

There has been an attempt to raise a laugh at the proposition of the Hon. Senator Logan to appropriate \$60,000,000 in aid of education, but I give you here figures which cannot be invalidated, showing that his proposition falls \$60,000,000 short of the sum which would be required to furnish for a single year all our school children now without school sittings and teachers. Mr. Senator Blair, in his examination of this point in his recent speech, considering that Texas has a school period of only six years, states that, if the school life were properly lengthened in that and other States, the number reported without school accommodations and without teachers would be increased by three millions.

In our cities we are accustomed to expect the best teachers, best school houses, best methods, and best supervision; but laws making attendance obligatory are wanting in more than half of the States, and on an average two-fifths of the children are not enrolled in the

schools. Here are forced upon us the terrible problems encountered in older civilizations and more dense populations.

These deficiencies, we must note moreover, are not equally distributed through the entire country, but are mainly concentrated in the Southern States, where the late war left its most disastrous effects. The white people were impoverished and the colored people entered upon their liberty in total destitution. The setting up of the public school system was one of the crucial tests of the revolution that was transpiring in the affairs of the Southern people, and was most obnoxious to the whites. All their antecedent notions rose up against it, but in spite of the prevailing poverty and indifference or opposition, the public school idea gained ground.

The fifteen States and the District of Columbia where slavery prevailed, having a legal white school population of 3,899,961, had 2,215,674 enrolled in schools, and with a colored school population of 1,803,257 had 784,709 enrolled, and expended \$12,475,044. This money, it should be remembered, is divided pro rata without distinction of color in all States excepting Kentucky and Delaware. In the former State the colored people have had for educational purposes the benefit only of the income of the tax upon their own property, and polls, and specified fines, and forfeitures. By an act of the last legislature, however, provision was made for submitting to the people the question of adding a two mills tax upon property for educational purposes, uniting this and the amount from the previous provisions for education, and distributing the whole pro rata per capita. In Delaware \$2,500 are now appropriated for the colored schools. What has thus been accomplished in these States for education may be taken as a pledge of what they will do.

In considering the local necessities of the South, embarrassed by the ignorance of the colored population, it should not be forgotten that there are now conducted for the benefit of the colored people forty-four normal

schools with 7,408 students, thirty-six schools for secondary instruction with 5,237 students, fifteen universities and colleges with 1,717 students, twenty-two schools of theology with 800 students, three schools of law with 33 students, two schools of medicine with 87 students, and two institutions for the deaf, dumb and blind, with 122 students.

These institutions for higher instruction of colored youth are mainly due to the benefactions of benevolent Christians; and it is claimed by the several denominational agencies at work that they have expended in this direction some ten millions of dollars. In the same regions it is known that the nation expended through the Freedmen's Bureau in behalf of education \$5,262,511. Here, too, the great Peabody benefaction, managed with the greatest skill in educating both blacks and whites, has expended \$1,191,790, and now the Slater fund of a million is provided to give greater efficiency, especially for the education of the blacks.

In these late slave States the family, the church, and other agencies for the enlightenment of society have been rehabilitated, and substantially restored to their normal conditions of activity; and yet the census shows that there are in these States 1,676,939 white persons, and a total of whites and blacks of 4,741,173, ten years old and over, who cannot write.

✓ To which great agency can you assign the additional burden of educating these illiterates? To the family? How many families of the most cultured and best conditioned are unable to educate their children as in former times or as they desire; and among those colored people the least supplied with schools, how widely is the family a minus quantity as a factor in promoting the improvement of the young. Shall we then look to the church for the light to overcome this darkness? How inadequate are the resources of the church in the South to supply sittings and preachers for the special function of declaring the Gospel. How generally are they in debt. What appeals are they compelled to make to

their friends in other quarters. Shall we turn then, thirdly, to the States, already impoverished and loaded with taxes and embarrassed by questions of repudiation? In reply, let me invite attention to the fact that the taxable real and personal property reported for assessment in those States is given in round numbers as \$3,379,000,000, while the real and personal property in New York and New Jersey alone is worth nearly an equal amount, or \$3,292,000,000. What would the people of these two States say to an additional assessment on their property sufficient to erect all the additional schoolhouses and supply all the teachers for the instruction of the millions of illiterates in the South? All are familiar with the sensitiveness in the several Northern States to the assessment of any additional tax for education or any other purpose, and there the total wealth as assessed is reported as \$13,095,000,000, or nearly ten billions more than in the South.

It should be remembered, in addition to the short period in which schools are already taught in the South, that there are 2,702,835 children of school age not enrolled for instruction. Take another comparison: Charleston, South Carolina, now levies a tax of three mills on a dollar; but to furnish the children of that State a fair approach to the instruction given those in Massachusetts would require a tax on the property of the State of nearly three cents to the dollar! This the friends of education in Massachusetts or any other State would hesitate to propose in their own case.

In view of these facts need we ask, why have the benevolent of all classes, the friends of humanity, of order, of law, of progress, been so profoundly moved by anxiety? Why have the consciences of so many been urging the provision of education for these people? One thing is clear: these earnest patriots have sought no harm to either race; they have not acted in antagonism to any of the great agencies for the reformation and blessing of society, the family, or the church, or the cities or States of that region, but their aim has been to

relieve burdens that would paralyze these agencies. They have labored to secure for the youth of the South that instruction and training which by precept and example inspire to a higher and better life. They believe profoundly that lust, and avarice, and anger creep in the dark jungles of man's ignorance.

In their studies of social science they read the story of "Margaret, the mother of criminals," wherein they learn that the neglect to care for that single Juke family living on the outskirts of a New York village resulted in a most marvellous multiplication of criminals and paupers. Mr. Dugdale traced 1,200 descendants. Of these 280 were adult paupers, and 140 criminals and offenders, guilty of seven murders and of numerous thefts, highway robberies, and nearly every offence known in the calendar of crime; and cost society for their support or punishment \$1,308,000, "without reckoning," as Mr. Dugdale observes, "the cash paid for whiskey, or the entailment of these evils upon posterity, or the incurable diseases, idiocy, and insanity, growing out of their debaucheries, and reaching further than we can calculate."

Much has been said and written of the effect upon the increase of the comforts of life and the increase of wealth by that education which tends to develop a sound mind in a healthy body, and intelligent, healthy, honest men and women. This material result of right education may be set forth in numerous ways. All political economists recognize it.

Dr. Jarvis, a noted sociologist, has given a simple but effective illustration. He says:

"Ignorant and coarse workmen need to have strong and heavy tools to endure the rough handling they receive without being broken. The hoes with which the ignorant scavengers used to clean the streets in a southern city were enormously thick and heavy. The handles were very large poles, taken from the forest in their natural state, with the branches trimmed off. The reason given for their clumsiness was that these

“heavy tools were necessary for the rude laborers on the farm and the street cleaners of the same want of culture. No others would be safe in their hands. The light hoe, which skillful men use with safety and advantage, would be broken by the rough usage of the ignorant and careless workman. On further testing them it was found that the coarse hoes, with their huge handles, weighed twelve pounds each, while the more graceful tools of cast steel, with turned handles, weighed less than two pounds.

“Here was a great difference in the amount of force that must be expended in moving the instrument before it could effect its purpose: six times as great for the laborer who worked with his muscles alone as for him who could bring his brain and intelligence to aid and direct his physical exertions.

“Suppose that two scavengers of equal bodily strength, but with different mental activity, could make the same bodily exertions through the day; suppose that they were employed side by side in cleaning the street, the intelligent using the light hoe and the ignorant man using the heavy instrument; suppose each could haul twenty pounds at a time and could make the same number of strokes; then the load which was hauled by the dull workman would consist of twelve pounds of hoe and eight pounds of mud, while that drawn by his bright associate would consist of two pounds of hoe and eighteen pounds of mud. The result of the same expenditure of force would be more than twice as great when guided by intelligence as when left to the hand alone.

“There is another consideration connected with the expenditure of force: the two scavengers are supposed to use the same exertion in hauling the mud to the heap, but when they throw their implements back for another load, one carries twelve pounds, thereby expending six times as much strength as the other whose hoe weighs only two pounds.”

I must not pause to elaborate these points, but sup-

posing (1) that the labor of an illiterate is increased in value 25 per cent. by teaching him to read and write, 50 per cent. by fairly educating him and 75 per cent. by giving him a thorough training; and (2) that the average value of the labor of literates is the same as the average wages paid employees in manufactories, then the following computations give sound conclusions.

✓ By the census of 1880 the number of persons of 21 years of age and upwards in the Southern States who were unable to write was 2,984,387. If 75 per cent. of them should be taught to read and write, it would increase the value of the labor of 2,238,290 persons 25 per cent. V The present value of their labor is, approximately, \$248 a year each. The increase of value would be \$62 a year per capita, a total of \$138,773,980. If 15 per cent. of the illiterates should be fairly educated, it would increase the value of the labor of 447,658 persons 50 per cent. or from \$248 to \$372 a year each. The total of this annual increase would be \$55,509,592. If the remaining 10 per cent. of illiterates should have the value of their labor increased 75 per cent. by being thoroughly trained, the industrial value of 298,439 persons would be raised from \$248 to \$434 a year each, a total of \$55,509,654. By adding the three totals just given, it is seen that the increase which would come to the industrial value of illiterates in the Southern States would be, were they educated as indicated, \$241,727,220 a year.

A similar computation may be made for the entire country. The average annual wages paid by manufacturers is \$345. The number of persons 21 and over unable to write is 4,204,362. By teaching 75 per cent. of these to read and write, the labor of 3,153,272 individuals is increased in value from \$345 to \$431 a year, a total gain of \$271,181,392 each year. The gain which would come from educating 15 per cent. (630,654) of the illiterates so that their labor would be increased 50 per cent. in value would be \$108,787,815. The same amount would be gained by so training the remaining 10 per cent. of illiterates that their labor would be of 75 per cent. more



value; and the total annual profit to the country by the conversion of illiterate into educated labor would be, according to the premises assumed as a basis of computation, \$488,757,022 a year.

Need I go further to indicate that education is a most profitable investment for both labor and capital?

Amid these masses of figures you will not expect me to give in greater detail the statistics showing the depreciating influence of ignorance upon agriculture, upon the mechanic arts, upon commerce, upon all the great activities by which society lives and moves, nor will you desire me to trace in detail the share that ignorance pure and simple has in the degradation of the pauper classes, in the increase of criminality and its cost, or the propagation of disease and the insecurity of health and life; but I cannot dismiss this vast ignorance without a word with reference to its possible political evils. Omitting any reference to the influence of illiteracy during minority or any bearing of the illiteracy of the female adults, the late census shows us that there is a great army of 1,870,216 adult males or voters who cannot write, an army nearly double that ever in the field during the late deplorable civil war. You will certainly excuse me from any delineation of the horrors of the devastation that might follow their united and concentrated efforts against the peace and order of society. I simply call your attention to what may be the injurious effect of their silent action at the polls. The members of our respective political parties believe in the rightness of their principles and seek to make their appeal to the reason and consciences of the people; but the figures disclose the alarming fact that in eleven States these illiterate voters outnumbered the votes cast in the last Presidential election by either of the political parties. Thus should they unite under any strong, impassioned, successful leader, they would have absolute control of legislation and offices in those States, and of the election of twenty-two members of the United States Senate.

Again running down the column of these alarming

figures and taking into account the votes of the two political parties in the last presidential election, we find that in all but five of the States in the Union there are enough of these illiterate voters to have reversed the result of the election in each of these States. The press, the public mind, are occupied with questions of tariff, questions of capital and labor, questions of corporations and private rights. Do they sufficiently consider what material these ignorant masses offer for the destructive revolutions that have occurred in connection with these questions in older civilizations and under other forms of government? Does the press consider that none of its information, none of its pleadings, none of the considerations it presents can be read by 4,923,451 persons ten years old and over, and that for them its voices of warning and instruction fall on deaf ears?

Before passing from this class of considerations you will pardon me for reminding you that many of our intelligent people, disgusted as they say by the ignorance and corruption they meet, show a disposition not to participate in political action; and that generally the more ignorant can be rallied to do what their leaders desire. In the light of this general fact I beg you to turn to the Tribune Almanac for 1882 and, after adding up the columns of votes cast, draw out of its total the number in each State whose votes were not cast or were not counted in the last election: you will find the startling result that these votes not cast or not counted make a grand total in all the States of 3,353,186; or more than three-fourths of the number who voted on either side, and as a rule in each State sufficient or two or three times enough to have reversed the election.

No summary of educational points from a national view should omit the condition of education in the Territories. Here we are confronted with all the Indian problems, which could be speedily solved if the 60,000 Indian children should be educated in the conduct of life for a few school generations. In the Territories, too, are the children of the 30,000 Alaskans without legal pro-

vision for their education. Here, too, is the large Spanish and substantially foreign population of New Mexico, with little or no provision for instruction in the English language or American thought. Here, too, are the children of the 150,000 polygamists, in spite of the Edmunds act, said to be increased this year by 15,000 immigrants from foreign countries.

Another question that is springing up all over the land is, what can be done by education in the absence of apprenticeship, and the progress of society to give skill to handicraft? For this purpose essential modifications in methods and appliances must be made and will cost large sums of money. Yet they must come. This country, like the rest of the world, is moving steadily towards industrial training. Besides in cities, in addition to the absence of millions of school age already noted, there are multitudes below that age who are so exposed to death or disease, or the formation of evil and destructive habits, that public action will be required in self defence, if for no other reason. Already this necessity has been recognized in France, and so-called maternal schools have been provided, in which there now 600,000 children from two to six years of age.

Passing from point to point thus abruptly along these outline views, opening here and there into vast vistas that we have no time to study, allow me to ask, what are you going to do about these questions? Will you leave affairs to float on as they are, trusting that there is an overmastering power in the form of our government to prevent the evils so destructive to society in a monarchy or aristocracy? Before trusting ourselves entirely to the dangerous fallacy it may not be amiss for us to remember that before we have passed far beyond the first century of our existence as a nation, two Presidents, two Chief Magistrates, have been removed by the hand of the assassin? And were not Abraham Lincoln and James A. Garfield, as men, as characters, rising from the humblest walks of life to the highest positions in the gift of the people,

in a peculiar sense the products specially claimed for our institutions? And again before charging the evils of Greek and Italian brigandage to a monarchical form of government, and asserting their impossibility in the midst of our free institutions and under our glorious banner, will it be amiss to recall the story of the James brothers, and the honors bestowed upon them in this our day and in the very centre of our boasted civilization? I repeat, shall we leave the cure of these evils to the agencies now operating those that we have enumerated, and the great voluntary activities of temperance, and science, and reform. Have we not seen how each and finally all of the agencies are unequal to the task of universal education which "like Spring" shall "leave no corner of the land untouched?"

Has there not been in our hearts and on our lips one great patron of education, the Nation, not yet sufficiently invoked? And is not this the only one available, equal in power and ample in means to meet the present emergency? This patron does not and need not displace or control either family, church or State, or voluntary activity. The nation need act only by its patronage, by its moral influence, by a reasonable disbursement of aid accompanied simply by conditions that shall make its expenditure honest and efficient. It need act only as a patron, whose aid given to the States shall lift the burden impossible for all other agencies to bear, and by suitable aid stimulate them to greater endeavor by assuring their hope of success.

Clearly this aid by the General Government to education can do no violence to that constitutional provision which authorizes Congress to act for the general welfare, and under which so many millions of dollars have been so freely voted to roads, rivers, and internal improvements. The policy of this aid accords with the traditions and practices of the Government from its foundation. Out of it came the great grants of land to common schools, to agricultural colleges, and to universities, amounting to nearly seventy-nine millions of acres,

that have had such incalculable influence upon the destiny of the newer States.

The General Government is the largest patron of science. Under it more researches are conducted than under any other agency among us.

For the enlightenment of the citizen it carries on one of the largest printing establishments in the world. Its aid in the establishment of libraries reaches millions of dollars. This sending abroad of light and knowledge to every nook and corner aids every locality to judge and act intelligently for itself. This diffusion of knowledge is not centralization of power, but the reverse.

Further, the General Government aided the establishment of the first institution, that at Hartford, for the instruction of the deaf and dumb, and has crowned all the institutions of that class in the several States by that noble one, the Deaf-Mute College at Washington, the first of its rank in the world, be it said to the honor of American statesmen.

When the blind had in vain sought aid in obtaining a literature elsewhere, the General Government gave a permanent fund of a quarter million of dollars for a printing house for the blind, and those in every congressional district may have the benefit.

In 1836 when the National Treasury was as it is now more than full, a surplus of over twenty million dollars was disbursed among the States that received it as a loan, and in a number of instances used it to increase their school funds. Thus the National Treasury promoted that revival of education which was then arousing the indifferent and overcoming the hostile, and therefore specially contributed to the preparation of the generation that saved the Union.

Only the General Government can do justice to all the interests affected by that great river the "Father of Waters." Only the General Government has been able to cope with that terrible plague, the yellow fever. So only can the nation meet the greatness of the present emergency by adequately aiding existing agencies, and

thus enable the people to cope with the plague of ignorance more fatal to human good than any leprosy that can assail the body. Besides, we should not forget that the nation by the Constitution must guarantee to each State a republican form of government; and by later provisions we are aware that the nation has assumed to protect the citizenship of those formerly slaves. Do we not know, if the theories are sound on which rest our institutions of freedom, that in the execution of either of these trusts the nation would in vain marshal armies until they were as oppressive as those of the old world. Equally in vain it would add statute to statute, if the people themselves, the people resident in the locality in peril, do not possess or do not acquire that intelligence and virtue without which a republican form of government and the enjoyment of American citizenship are absolutely impossible?

It was the belief of the fathers, and it is a truth by which we must abide, that the free intelligent choice of the people is our only safety. If the nation may use its navies and armies to guarantee this safety, and fail, as it must, if no other means are employed, may it not rightfully, at least as a generous patron, bestow the means to aid the States in building school houses, or in paying teachers, whereby the people may be so enlightened that they shall come of their own free will to know, cherish, achieve, and defend this result?

Are not the great patriotic thought and the increasing anxiety for the Republic strongly gravitating to this conclusion, and pointing to our national statesmen as the men on whom rest the final responsibilities for adequate action?

The fathers of the republic, before they had gone the half of twenty years, found the defects and weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation. They achieved their greatest triumph of statesmanship in revision and in giving us the Constitution. Have not our statesmen in the great changes of the last score of years seen the imperative need of other revisions, and discovered the

opportunity by giving to universal suffrage the guarantee of universal intelligence, to add new assurance of the prosperity of the country; and of the continuance of our liberties, and new glories to American citizenship?

Then shall

Columbia, Columbia, to glory arise,  
The queen of the world and the child of the skies.  
Thy genius commands thee ; with rapture behold  
While ages on ages thy splendors unfold."

The following statistics are added at the suggestion of  
DEXTER A. HAWKINS, of New York.

*Number of Persons unable to write, according to advance  
sheets of the Census of 1880.*

	Number 10 years old and over			Number 21 years old and over		
	Total.	White.	Other Races.	Total.	White.	Other Races.
Maine .....	22,170	21,758	412	16,569	16,234	335
New Hampshire.....	14,302	14,208	94	10,775	10,694	81
Vermont.....	15,837	15,681	156	13,001	12,872	129
Massachusetts.....	92,980	90,658	2,322	83,892	81,671	2,221
Rhode Island.....	24,793	23,544	1,249	19,750	18,611	1,139
Connecticut.....	28,424	26,763	1,661	24,836	23,339	1,497
New York.....	219,600	208,175	11,425	192,184	182,050	10,134
New Jersey.....	53,249	44,049	9,200	45,192	37,348	7,844
Pennsylvania.....	228,014	209,981	18,033	189,837	174,286	15,551
Ohio.....	131,847	115,491	16,356	106,768	92,616	14,152
Michigan.....	63,723	58,932	4,791	52,049	48,291	3,758
Indiana.....	110,761	100,398	10,363	85,882	77,076	8,806
Wisconsin.....	55,558	54,233	1,325	46,779	45,798	981
Illinois.....	145,397	132,426	12,971	109,753	99,356	10,397
Minnesota.....	34,546	33,506	1,040	28,414	27,645	769
Iowa.....	46,609	44,337	2,272	37,773	35,815	1,958
Nebraska.....	11,528	10,926	602	8,317	7,821	496
Kansas.....	39,476	24,888	14,588	28,593	17,095	11,498
Ag. Northern Division...	1,338,814	1,229,954	108,860	1,100,363	1,008,617	91,746



	Number 10 years old and over			Number 21 years old and over		
	Total.	White.	Other Races.	Total.	White.	Other Races.
Delaware .....	19,414	8,346	11,068	14,397	6,462	7,935
Maryland .....	134,488	44,316	90,172	100,512	34,155	66,357
District of Columbia.....	25,778	3,988	21,790	23,016	3,569	19,447
Virginia .....	430,352	114,692	315,660	285,344	71,004	214,340
West Virginia.....	85,376	75,237	10,139	52,879	45,340	7,539
Kentucky.....	348,392	214,497	133,895	215,461	124,723	90,738
North Carolina.....	463,975	192,032	271,943	280,589	116,437	174,152
Tennessee.....	410,722	216,227	194,495	245,673	118,734	126,939
South Carolina.....	369,848	59,777	310,071	234,398	34,335	200,063
Georgia.....	520,416	128,934	391,482	318,911	71,693	247,318
Alabama.....	433,447	111,767	321,630	267,052	60,174	206,878
Florida .....	80,183	19,763	60,420	50,638	10,885	39,753
Mississippi.....	373,201	53,448	319,753	235,911	27,789	208,122
Missouri .....	208,754	152,510	56,244	130,281	89,924	40,357
Arkansas.. ..	202,015	98,542	103,473	118,679	50,235	68,444
Louisiana .....	318,380	58,951	259,429	213,602	34,813	178,789
Texas.....	316,432	123,912	192,520	186,944	65,117	121,827
Ag. Southern Division...	4,741,123	1,676,939	3,064,184	2,984,387	965,389	2,018,998
California.....	53,430	26,090	27,340	44,725	22,625	22,100
Oregon .....	7,423	4,343	3,080	5,291	2,904	2,387
Nevada .....	4,069	1,915	2,154	3,445	1,807	1,638
Colorado .....	10,474	9,906	568	7,490	7,025	465
Arizona Territory .....	5,842	4,824	1,018	4,183	3,550	633
Washington Territory...	3,889	1,429	2,460	2,895	1,011	1,884
Idaho Territory.....	1,778	784	994	1,453	510	943
Utah Territory.....	8,326	8,167	639	5,903	5,385	518
Montana Territory.....	1,707	631	1,076	1,302	525	777
Dakota Territory.....	4,821	4,157	664	3,664	3,206	458
Wyoming Territory.....	556	374	182	429	285	144
New Mexico Territory ...	57,156	49,597	7,559	38,832	33,623	5,209
Ag. Pacific Division.....	160,021	112,187	47,834	119,612	82,456	37,156
Grand Ag. United States.	6,239,958	3,019,080	3,220,878	4,204,362	2,056,462	2,147,900



























LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 029 498 621 2